

AN UNUSUAL *MIRABILIS* PLANT!

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Up until now *Nepenthes* flowers have always been male or female. As I said "up until now." This season we recorded one of the first true hermaphroditic *Nepenthes*. A green *Nepenthes mirabilis*, imported out of Thailand back in 1978, became very big for us each year but refused to flower. Finally, after seven years, it produced what appeared to be a typical male flower arrangement. The stalk had some twenty male flowers. After a week, four of them produced a stigma in the center of the anthers and self pollinated. The anthers then enlarged to become ovaries. Four seed pods developed fat and green, a true morphadytic plant!

Unfortunately, I was in the hospital for a week and the *Nepenthes mirabilis* did not get water at all. The lower leaves as well as the flower stalk turned brown, and the

seeds were still too immature to expect any germination. Perhaps better luck next season. (Photo by B. Bednar.)



S. leucophylla (Hairy)

Photo by B. Pierson and Ron Mirande.

combination of genes in a species; however, when a plant turns up that may be a result of this variation, it is quite often assumed that this plant is a result of distant hybridization with another species. If this is the case, then is *S. rubra* ssp. *wherryi* also considered to be a variety which has been formed in the same way, by a series of back-crosses? I also have in my collection a *S. rubra* ssp. *rubra*, which is slightly pubescent, although nowhere near as much as the *S. leucophylla* which is hairier than any *S. purpurea* ssp. *venosa* in my collection, or any that I have seen anywhere else.

Should it be assumed that *S. purpurea* is the only *Sarracenia* which is allowed to have a pubescent variety, and that any other *Sarracenia* species which has a pubescent variety show up from time to time cannot be a real variety, but is only the result of a distant back-cross with *S. purpurea* ssp. *venosa*? Is it actually possible that *S. purpurea* ssp. *purpurea* may be the result of a distant back-cross between *S. purpurea* ssp. *venosa* and another of the upright species, that has become a new variety, and been